



STATE OF WISCONSIN \

**DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS
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DATE: December 7, 2005

TO: Governor Jim Doyle
Wisconsin Congressional Delegation
State Legislators

FROM: Johnnie Smith
Administrator

**SUBJECT: SITUATION REPORT #13 ON WISCONSIN'S RESPONSE TO
HURRICANE KATRINA**

This situation report is provided to update you on the actions taken by federal, state and local governments as well as others in the State in response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. It outlines the problems and issues that are now or will be confronting the State in the future when providing housing and addressing other needs of hurricane evacuees that have relocated, temporarily or permanently, in Wisconsin.

On September 8, 2005, Governor Doyle requested the President declare an emergency declaration for the State of Wisconsin as a result of Hurricane Katrina that occurred on August, 29, 2005. The emergency declaration was requested to cover 100% of the costs associated with providing emergency shelter and mass care for the evacuees that were arriving in the State. Emergency Declaration FEMA-3249-EM was granted on September 13th. In addition to the evacuees arriving from Hurricane Katrina, costs associated with evacuees from Hurricane Rita were also later included.

The Tommy G. Thompson Youth Center at Wisconsin State Fair Park in West Allis, Milwaukee County, was designated as a shelter to receive evacuees from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The site was capable of housing up to 950 individuals. The shelter was managed by the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army. On September 8th, 170 evacuees, along with 26 animals, arrived via two FEMA-chartered flights. The shelter, which closed November 1, housed 365 evacuees, including some who self-evacuated. Most evacuees were placed in housing with some going to hotels. The American Red Cross served 827 cases.

A service center was established at the shelter where individuals could register for unemployment assistance, food stamps, Medicare, and other programs. In addition,

FEMA provided community relations staff to outreach to evacuees and assist them in registering for FEMA assistance. The Milwaukee Impact 2-1-1 served as the Wisconsin Hurricane Relief Center and referred evacuees to appropriate resources. A mini-one stop service center was opened in the Highland Towers after the closing of the shelter at the Tommy Thompson Youth Center.

The highest number of households registered with FEMA identifying that they were in Wisconsin was 1,994 on October 26, 2005. That number has been decreasing as some evacuees have either returned home or have traveled to another state to find housing. The majority of the households remaining in Wisconsin are in Milwaukee and the southeast part of the State and Dane County. The majority of evacuees indicated that they were staying with friends and relatives.

On September 9, 2005, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) issued guidance to clarify eligibility of costs likely to be borne by state and local governments in the sheltering and care of the evacuees. Eligible costs would be reimbursed 100% under the Emergency Declaration issued by the President through the Public Assistance Program funded under the authority of Section 403 of the Stafford Act. This program is administered through Wisconsin Emergency Management. Subsequent guidance was issued by FEMA on September 29, October 14, and November 14 with a revision on November 23, 2005. Eligible costs discussed in the guidance included:

- Transportation
- Labor Costs
- Shelter Operating Costs
- Sheltering of evacuated hospital patients
- Schools
- Shelter and transitional housing
- Emergency Operations Center Costs
- Emergency Medical Care

For those evacuees that desire to move to another state, one-way transportation has been and will continue to be available through December 31 through FEMA's Facilitated Relocation Program. FEMA will provide transportation through the same program for evacuees who want to return to their home state with no scheduled program deadline.

Through the Section 408, Individuals and Households Program, evacuees apply to FEMA directly for individual assistance. Eligible individuals may receive up to 18 months in rental assistance through the program as well as funds for personal property losses. To ensure that no evacuee would be homeless, FEMA created the Interim/Transitional Housing Program under the authority of the Section 403, Public Assistance Program. Eligible state and local governments would be reimbursed for providing housing to evacuees. This included leases for apartments, hotels or motels

for up to 12 months. Included were costs for security deposits, monthly utilities, furniture and essential household items, and other costs. The complete guidance can be downloaded at <http://www.fema.gov/rrr/pa/policy.shtm>.

Based on this new interim/transitional housing program, a group consisting of representation from Wisconsin Emergency Management, State Department of Workforce Development, Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, US Department of Agriculture/Rural Development, Milwaukee Housing Authority, American Red Cross, and Maximus (private contractor) developed a protocol for providing housing to evacuees. It contained a uniform policy with standardized procedures that would meet the needs of housing providers of all types. The protocol includes procedures for housing the evacuees in the Milwaukee area and modified procedures for housing the evacuees throughout the rest of the state. Local media outlets were utilized to provide information to communities and evacuees on housing assistance available. In addition, this information was shared with County Emergency Management Directors, County Human Services, local American Red Cross chapters, VOAD, and others that could assist in providing housing information to evacuees and families located within the State.

The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) is a subgrantee of the Section 403 Public Assistance Program and coordinated with the Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) to provide interim/transitional housing throughout the state (with the exception of the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee.) WHEDA entered into an agreement with the PHAs and provides reimbursement for eligible costs through the Public Assistance Program. WEM developed and submitted a project worksheet for WHEDA including three-months worth of rent based on the cost of an average two-bedroom apartment statewide, furniture costs for a two-bedroom apartment in addition to other eligible costs including an estimate for essential household items, utilities, temporary help that may be required in administering the program, contract costs with PHAs, and other eligible costs.

The local PHA coordinates and provides housing search assistance (public housing, Section 8 tenant and project based, and market rent.) If a family comes directly to the PHA, the PHA refers the family to the local American Red Cross chapter and the County Human Services for additional assistance that may be available. The PHA executed contracts with housing providers and paid security deposits; paid for utility deposits where required; purchased furniture and other essential household items as needed; submitted documentation to WHEDA for reimbursement; and provided family follow-up as necessary.

Since the majority of the evacuees are in the Milwaukee area, the Housing Authority for the City of Milwaukee (HACM) is also a subgrantee of the Public Assistance Program and will administer the Interim/Transitional Housing Program for the evacuees in the Milwaukee area.

To date the HACM has provided housing through FEMA's Interim/Transitional Housing Program to 103 households. Another 5 households throughout the state have received housing from various PHAs. Leases have been signed from one-month up to one-year. To date, approximately \$2.7 million has been approved to reimburse state and local governments through the Section 403 program.

The Public Housing Authorities are also providing housing to those evacuees eligible under the Katrina Housing Assistance Program (KDHP) administered through HUD. Under KDHP, housing can be provided to eligible evacuees for up to 18 months.

On November 14th, FEMA issued guidance that announced a major accelerated shift from FEMA's Interim/Transitional Housing program under Section 403 to Section 408, Individuals and Households Program. The guidance memorandum established procedures for transitioning from interim and temporary shelter to longer-term temporary housing under the Section 408, Individuals and Households Program. The guidance included four key program changes. The accelerated time schedule required: 1) All evacuees must be out of corporate lodging (motels/hotels) by December 1, 2005; 2) All leases under Section 403 (Public Assistance) must be signed by December 1, 2005; 3) The rental leases must terminate by March 1, 2006; and 4) FEMA would pay for fees associated with terminating leases signed under the initial "leases up-to-12 months" program guidance. Most felt the changes in program guidance would result in additional hardship for evacuees. On November 23rd, FEMA revised the guidance and extended the deadline for terminating corporate lodging and the signing of rental leases to December 15th. WEM staff contacted the hotels where evacuees were known to reside and provided information on how to reach the local Public Housing Authority. As of December 6th, there were 5 individuals staying in hotels in the State. WEM immediately notified all of the PHAs regarding the accelerated deadlines so that they could assist evacuees in need of housing prior to December 15th.

FEMA anticipates contacting every evacuee to outline housing options and responsibilities so that evacuees can transition from the Section 403 sheltering to Section 408 housing by March 1, 2006. Those state and local agencies dealing with evacuees are very concerned that some evacuees will not qualify for Section 408 housing which could result in evacuees being homeless in Wisconsin come March 1st. These evacuees will then need to be served by existing state housing and social programs and could result in a large gap between needs and programs.

On November 17th, WEM staff convened a meeting with state and federal agencies as well as members of VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster) to discuss the problems, concerns and issues in providing long-term assistance to those evacuees in the State. We confirmed that the problems are of a national scale that has now become an issue that will need to be addressed at all levels of government. Attached are the issues and the action items identified at the meeting by the participants.

The agencies and organizations were asked to list their specific concerns and program impacts so that we could develop a strategy to outline potential solutions for the identified needs. We are meeting on December 12, 2005 to discuss these topics.

WEM also plans to provide a briefing for state legislators and the Wisconsin Congressional delegation to further outline some of the potential problems the state could encounter with evacuees who remain in the state. We will be contacting you in the near future regarding that meeting.

If you have questions on the Katrina response, please contact Roxanne Gray at 608-242-3211, or Susan Boldt at 608-242-3214.

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